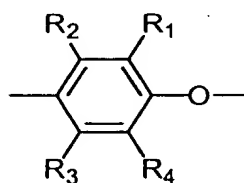


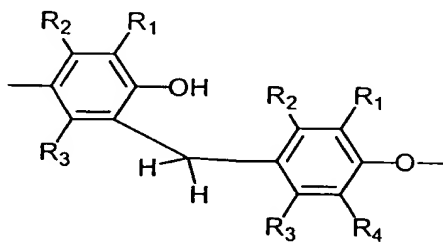
In the Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A modified polyphenylene ether resin which is a reaction product of 100 parts by weight of (A) a polyphenylene ether having a main chain structure of the following formula (1):



(1)

B' (wherein R₁ and R₄ each independently represents hydrogen, a primary or secondary lower alkyl, a phenyl, an aminoalkyl or a hydrocarbonoxy, and R₂ and R₃ each independently represents hydrogen, a primary or secondary lower alkyl or phenyl), and 0.01 to 10.0 parts by weight of (B) a modifier selected from the group consisting of conjugated non-aromatic diene compounds, dienophilic compounds having one dienophile group and precursors of the diene or dienophilic compounds, wherein the number of rearrangement structures each represented by the following formula (2):



(2)

(wherein R₁, R₂, R₃ and R₄ have the same meanings as defined above in the formula (1)) is less than 0.01 per 100 phenylene ether units of the formula (1) and wherein the reaction to

obtain the modified polyphenylene ether resin is carried out in a state where the polyphenylene ether is a solid.

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2. (Original) The modified polyphenylene ether resin according to claim 1, wherein the number of the rearrangement structures represented by the formula (2) is less than 0.005 per 100 phenylene ether units of the formula (1).

3. (Original) The modified polyphenylene ether resin according to claim 1, which has a melting point of 240 to 260°C and is in the form of powder having an average particle size of 3.0 µm to 1.0 mm. ^{average} ~~average~~ ^{11/1/03}

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4. (Original) The modified polyphenylene ether resin according to claim 2, which has a melting point of 240 to 260°C and is in the form of powder having an average particle size of 3.0 µm to 1.0 mm.

5. (Original) The modified polyphenylene ether resin according to claim 1, wherein the modifier (B) is maleic anhydride, maleic acid, fumaric acid, phenyl maleimide, itaconic acid, malic acid, glycidyl acrylate or glycidyl methacrylate.

6. (Original) The modified polyphenylene ether resin according to claim 1, which is obtained by reacting 0.2 to 3.0 parts by weight of the modifier (B) with 100 parts by weight of the polyphenylene ether (A).

7. (Currently Amended) A process for preparing a modified polyphenylene ether resin, which comprises:

reacting a mixture of 100 parts by weight of (A) a polyphenylene ether having a main chain structure of the formula (1) as represented in claim 1 and 0.01 to 10 parts by weight of (B) a modifier selected from the group consisting of conjugated non-aromatic diene compounds, dienophilic compounds having one dienophile group and precursors of the diene or dienophilic compounds at a temperature not lower than a room temperature and not higher than the melting point of (A) wherein the reaction to obtain the modified polyphenylene ether resin is carried out in a state where the polyphenylene ether is a solid.

8. (Original) The process for preparing a modified polyphenylene ether resin according to claim 7, wherein the polyphenylene ether (A) is in the form of powder obtained by precipitation from a solution and has a melting point of 240 to 260°C.

9. (Original) The process for preparing a modified polyphenylene ether resin according to claim 7, wherein the reaction temperature is within a range of 100 to 230°C.

10. (Original) The process for preparing a modified polyphenylene ether resin according to claim 7, wherein the reaction temperature is within a range of 150 to 200°C.

Claim 11 (Withdrawn).

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12. (Original) The process for preparing a modified polyphenylene ether resin according to claim 7, wherein a Henschel mixer is employed upon preparation.

Claim 13 (Withdrawn).

14. (Original) The process for preparing a modified polyphenylene ether resin according to claim 7, wherein the modifier (B) is maleic anhydride, maleic acid, fumaric acid, phenyl maleimide, itaconic acid, malic acid, glycidyl acrylate or glycidyl methacrylate.

15. (Original) The process for preparing a modified polyphenylene ether resin according to claim 7, wherein 0.2 to 3.0 parts by weight of the modifier (B) is reacted with 100 parts by weight of the polyphenylene ether (A).
